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DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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October 9, 2008

TO: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe *for*  
Acting Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – AVIVA CENTER-  
AVIVA MAIN CAMPUS AND AVIVA GRADUATE HOUSE GROUP  
HOMES**

We have completed a review of Aviva Main Campus and Aviva Graduate House Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by the Aviva Center. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Aviva Main Campus Group Home is a thirty-six bed facility, which provides care for girls ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Aviva Main Campus Group Home was providing services for five DCFS children and twenty-eight Probation children.

Aviva Graduate House Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for girls ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Aviva Main Campus Group Home was providing services for two DCFS children and three Probation children.

Aviva Main Campus and Aviva Graduate House Group Homes are located in the Third District.

### **Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

### **Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Aviva Main Campus Group Home needs to teach children daily living skills and ensure that all staff treat children with respect and dignity at all times.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

WLW:MMO:DC:CC:asl

### **Attachments**

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS  
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS  
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer  
Wendy Wolf, Board Chair, Aviva Center  
Andrew Diamond, Executive Director, Aviva Center  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Aviva Center  
Aviva Main Campus Group Home  
Los Angeles, California 90046  
License Number: 191800285  
Rate Classification Level: 12**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Aviva Main Campus Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Six**

**Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

**Recommendation**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**III. Educational and Emancipation Services****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Six**

**Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's self-help and survival skills. However, children are not taught daily living skills such as cooking and grocery shopping.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendation**

1. Aviva Center management teach children daily living skills.

**IV. Recreation and Activities****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Six**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**V. Psychotropic Medication****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents****Comments:**

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication. Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VI. Personal Rights****Method of assessment – Interviews with children**

**Sample size: Six**

**Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. However, some children express a lack of satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that a few of the staff members do not treat them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send

and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

### **Recommendation**

- 2. Aviva Center management re-train staff to treat children with respect and dignity at all times and monitor their interactions.**

## **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Six**

#### **Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

### **Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**Aviva Center  
Aviva Graduate House  
Van Nuys, California 91406  
License Number: 191290796  
Rate Classification Level: 12**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Aviva Graduate House Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

**Recommendation**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

**Recommendation**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities.



Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

### **Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

#### **Comments:**

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication. Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

### **Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **VI. Personal Rights**

### **Method of assessment – Interviews with children**

#### **Sample size: Two**

#### **Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**



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President & CEO  
Andrew Diamond, LCSW



Candace Rhue, Group Home Audit Supervisor  
Department of Auditor- Controller, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple St., Room 410  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

June 2, 2008

Dear Ms. Rhue,

I want to thank both you and Ms Seigal for your continued cooperation during this collaborative process of our annual audit, and for the many positive feedback by Ms Seigal during the audit process.

The following Corrective Action Plan is respectfully submitted for your review:

**Section III Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Recommendation**

1. **Aviva staff teach children daily living skills such as cooking and grocery shopping.**

**Corrective Action:**

Aviva residents are exposed to many daily living skills through our Work Incentive Program (formerly Independent Living Skills Program)

At the **Annenberg** site, Aviva has re-implemented weekly cooking and baking classes taught by members of our Volunteer Program during Individualized Activities. These classes run for 6-week units several times during the year and are much enjoyed by the girls. In addition, the residents participate in a Food Committee, where they learn how to balance nutrition, team decision making skills, and food origin and expense.

On the weekly Family Night, the residents are given a choice of special treats to enjoy with their unit activity. They learn to budget the allotted money and take turns accompanying the supervisor to the grocery store to make the purchases.

These activities are documented in the residents' individualized Needs and Services Plans and are reviewed by the Clinical Director. As a part of the Day Treatment Program, The Day Treatment Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all residents have an opportunity to engage in these skill-building activities during their placement at Aviva.

At the 6-bed **Van Nuys** site the girls are taught meal planning, food shopping, and meal preparation on a rotating schedule. They assist with developing the menu and take turns accompanying the supervisor or staff to the grocery store. Cultural food diversity is encouraged and the girls enjoy preparing and exploring new cuisines. Recently, the vendor for the food orders was changed from a delivery service to a retail establishment to provide more opportunity for "real life" shopping. In addition the residents earn "Girl's Night Out", where they practice social skills and table manners at a restaurant. They participate in ordering their food with a budgeted amount of money, and learn to calculate a tip. The residents at Van Nuys are also scheduled to have cooking classes by the Volunteers for the next 6-week unit of Individualized Activities which will be held periodically through the year.

These classes and activities are documented in the residents' individualized Needs and Services Plans and are reviewed by the Clinical Director.

## **Section VI. Personal Rights**

### **Recommendation**

- 2. Aviva management re-train needed staff to treat children with respect and dignity at all times and monitor their interactions.**

### **Corrective Action**

As noted by the Auditor Controller, the children overall express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity. On the rare occasion that a staff member fails to meet the expectations of their interactions with the residents, they will be given individual additional supervision and training and if needed, a Supervisory Conference as a record of their performance. Steps have been taken with staff individually to address this issue. Failure to treat children with dignity and respect is not, and never has been tolerated.. Staff member's performance is monitored closely by their supervisor and Program Director and if they continue to demonstrate inadequacies in this area they will receive disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

All staff members receive comprehensive training during their orientation period regarding interactions with the residents. During this period they "shadow" a senior staff member and receive "new staff" trainings by the Program Director. In addition, trainings are held during staff meetings that cover a variety of topics that address the behavioral, emotional, and physical well-being of the residents.

Thank you for your review of this Corrective Action Plan. Please do not hesitate to call me with any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roni Maybin", followed by a horizontal line.

Roni Maybin, LMFT.  
Vice President, Residential Programs

CC: Andrew Diamond, LCSW